



DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

EPISCOPAL CHURCH CENTER • 815 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10017

alter H. Boyd, Press Officer
n. Drew Dearnaley, Assistant Press Officer

Telephone: (212) 867-8400

81047

February 12, 1981

URBAN ASSEMBLY BOLSTERS SEMINARIAN

by John E. Laycock, Editor
The Record, Diocese of Michigan

LOUISVILLE, Ky. -- "I'll come away from here with a renewed sense of the Church's vitality," said David Cobb during a break in the crowded schedule of the Episcopal Urban Caucus National Assembly.

"That's encouraging. You sit around your parish or seminary and feel as if you are part of one small, isolated group of people," he continued. "Sometimes the perspective of that group is pretty abstract.

"It's good to know that there's a larger group of people out there that's trying to do the Church's work in the cities," he said.

Dark-haired and bespectacled, the 25-year-old Cobb is in his first year of studies at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Evanston, Ill. A former high school English teacher and now a postulant for Holy Orders from the Diocese of Alabama, Cobb was among a handful of seminarians attending the Assembly which met Feb. 4-7 at the Galt House here. Composed of urban activists from throughout the Church, the Caucus was holding its first national membership meeting since its founding last year at Indianapolis.

"I came here principally out of curiosity to see what the national Church, or a national group in the Episcopal Church, was doing or talking about doing in the cities. I wanted to see both the content and the process," Cobb explained, noting that this was his first national conference.

"The experience has given me more specific information on the shape urban ministry will take," he said. "I can see more clearly the differences between the style of ministry appropriate to a stable suburban community and that needed in a changing urban neighborhood.

"I feel now that I'll be less frightened of that kind of situation," he noted.

-more-

Like other delegates, Cobb felt that spiritual renewal did not play a large enough role in the Assembly's proceedings, and suggested that future Caucus meetings should devote more time to worship.

"I also would have liked more information on projects that are actually being carried out at the parish level. . . ministries that are already underway. I got a lot more of that in private conversations with other participants than in the workshops," he said.

Yet for someone preparing for ordained ministry, he explained, the Assembly provided a unique opportunity to witness the Church struggling with complex social problems.

"I know that bringing a diverse group of people together to address major issues can cause conflict, especially at the parish level," he said. "I've seen here a confirmation that this process can work and can lead to a strong identification of ministries, especially among lay persons."

#####

DP, DX

